

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 00869 101606Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----101943Z 126240 /53
R 101504Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3974

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 869

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS SECDEF FOR ACTION, DEPT FOR INFO

FOR SECRETARY BROWN FROM AMBASSADOR DEAN

EO 11652: GDS
TAGSC POL, MILI, US, DA
SUBJECT: F-16: STORMS AHEAD IN DENMARK

REF: A) COPENHAGEN 799; B) COPENHAGEN 644

1. IN A LETTER TO YOU DATED JANUARY 28 AND SIGNED BY DANISH DEFENSE MINISTER ORLA MOLLER, DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES EXPRESSED A VARIETY OF CONCERNS WITH THE F-16 PROBRAM. THIS LETTER, HOWEVER, IS ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG AS FAR AS DENMARK IS CONCERNED, A FACT THAT WARRANTS YOUR ATTENTION.

2. FROM REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO ME AND MY STAFF BY SENIOR DANISH MILITARY OFFICERS, IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT WE ARE FACING A SERIOUS PROBLEM: DANISH DISSATISFACTION WITH THE AMOUNT OF OFFSET THEY EXPECT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH F-16 PRODUCTION.

3. THE GUARANTEE IN THE F-16 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF THE CONSORTIUM AS A CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 COPENH 00869 101606Z

WHOLE WILL RECEIVE A 58 PERCENT OFFSET HAS CREATED IN DENMARK THE FEELING THAT THIS COUNTRY SHOULD SHARE IN THE OFFSET BY SOMETHING APPROACHING THAT AMOUNT. F-16 CONTRACTS IN DENMARK, HOWEVER, BOTH SIGNED AND PROSPECTIVE, FALL FAR SHORT OF THAT LEVEL.

4. THIS "SHORTFALL" HAS NOW TAKEN ON OMINOUS POLITICAL

OVERTONES IN A COUNTRY FACED WITH A SLUGGISH ECONOMY AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE TOLD US THAT DEFENSE MINISTER MOLLER IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM COLLEAGUES IN THE GOVERNMENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO GET A "FAIRER SHARE" OF F-16 CO-PRODUCTION. (THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN IN OFFICE FOLLOWING FEBRUARY 15 ELECTIONS.) MOLLER IN CONSEQUENCE HAS LIT IT BE KNOWN THAT THE DANES WILL HAVE PROBLEMS IN SIGNING THE US LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE BEFORE IT EXPIRES APRIL 1 UNLESS AN OFFSET CLOSE TO 58 PERCENT IS OBTAINED. FAILURE TO SIGN WOULD CREATE A KIND OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN US AND THE DANES.

5. WHAT THE DANES WOULD ULTIMATELY DO IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE THEIR "FAIR SHARE", WE CANNOT SAY. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE, HOWEVER, IF THE F-16 PROGRAM BECAME A DIVISIVE DOMESTIC ISSUE, PRODUCING HARMFUL REPERCUSSIONS NOT ONLY FOR THE F-16 PROGRAM AND US-DANISH RELATIONS GENERALLY BUT FOR OTHER RATIONALIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION PROGRAMS WE MIGHT WANT TO LAUNCH IN THE FUTURE.

6. IN ORDER TO AVOID SUCH CONSEQUENCES, IT IS MY BELIEF THAT WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MOVE CLOSE TO THE 58 PERCENT CO-PRODUCTION LEVEL IN DENMARK. ONE POSSIBILITY MENTIONED BY THE DANES IS CERTAIN SUPPORT ITEMS--FLIGHT SIMULATOR, GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT, AND AVIONICS--WHOSE PRODUCTION HAS NOT YET BEEN ALLOCATED. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE DANES WOULD ACCEPT PRODUCTION ALTERNATIVES OUTSIDE THE F-16 PROGRAM. A
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PAGE 03 COPENH 00869 101606Z

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE SUGGESTED BY A HIGH/DANISH MILITARY OFFICIAL IS US PURCHASE OF A DANISH-BUILT FAST PATROL BOAT.

7. THE F-16 PROGRAM COULD BECOME A DIVISIVE US-DANISH ISSUE AS EARLY AS APRIL 1. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL, THEREFORE, IF YOU COULD GIVE IT PRIORITY ATTENTION.
DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, MILITARY PLANS, F-16
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COPENH00869
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770048-0562
Format: TEL
From: COPENHAGEN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770255/aaaabwqh.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 305b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 COPENHAGEN 799, 77 COPENHAGEN 644
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3357201
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-16: STORMS AHEAD IN DENMARK
TAGS: MPOL, MASS, MILI, US, DA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/305b74c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009